

Pear and Apple Variety Testing in Kenya, East Africa*

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I received a request in 1958 for budwood of several pear varieties from Mr. R. Anderson, a fruit grower, of border River Nurseries, at Kitale, Kenya, East Africa. The request was filled in March 1959 and all varieties were successfully propagated in Kenya.

Kitale is a city of approximately 6,000 people. It is located about 65 miles north of the Equator and 440 miles from the Indian Ocean. The elevation of Mr. Anderson's fruit farm is 6,300 feet above sea level. His primary interest is in fruit varieties which will grow and produce in the continuous summer climate of his locality.

Keiffer is the main pear variety in Kenya at higher elevations. It grows and bears at Kitale, but at over 8,000 feet elevation it is especially well adapted and bears profusely. It is considered a poor quality pear, which fact is accentuated by picking too early and rough handling.

The variety Baldwin was grafted in 1959 on French pear seedlings and on cuttings of Kieffer. Trees of Baldwin on Kieffer grew satisfactorily and have produced several crops of fruit. Mr. Anderson is optimistic that Baldwin may become a successful commercial pear in his area because of its excellent climatic adaptation. It appears to have a short rest period. This pear does not shed its leaves in late summer like Kieffer, and bears fruit profusely.

Baldwin trees on French pear seedlings have not produced a single bloom, even though the trees are as

large as Baldwin on Keiffer.

The pear varieties Campas, Garber, Orient and Wilder shed their leaves in late summer, and growth is uncertain. Morgan has performed erratically with long periods of inactivity, followed by excellent growth and fruit. In addition to the varieties which I sent Mr. Anderson, he has also tried LeConte, Packham's Favorite, Duchesse de Bordeaux, Conference, Louise Bonne and Winter Nelis. He stated, "Of these, none can be compared to Baldwin which outgrows the lot. Even Morgan outgrows Keiffer at my location."

All pears were sprayed annually in August with a 7% solution of Dytrol (a Shell product which is dinitro-ortho-cresol). All leaves turned yellow and were shed. Mr. Anderson stated in November 1966, "Of all the varieties, only Baldwin started proper growth again this year."

Mr. Anderson's main crop is apples, and he successfully grows Rome Beauty and Winter Banana. A colored photo of Rome Beauty trees heavily laden with bright red fruits was received by the author.

The apple trees were sprayed with Dytrol in August, and the timing was judged by the number of flowers occurring at that time. Flowers indicated the trees were ready for activity. The spray destroyed all leaves and the previously green orchard then looked like a fire had gone through it. The spray forced the trees into full flowering. If trees were not sprayed they would form a small amount of flowers every month in the year.

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Mr. Anderson has tried the Redgold, Yorkared, Staymared and Red Delicious apple cultivars, all of which were worthless to him. They would not continue to grow and consequently did not form worthwhile trees.

The author plans to send budwood

of ten cultivars of pear and five of apple in January 1967 for further testing in Kitale, Kenya. Varietal responses have certainly been unpredictable. The success with Baldwin pear lends hope for further experimentation with deciduous fruits in this locality.

New Yorker Nectarine

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The New Yorker nectarine, developed by the New York Agr. Exp. Station at Geneva, was sent to New Zealand under the number N.Y. 1017, in 1954, together with a number of other fruits for trial. After it was indexed and found free of any known viruses in New Zealand, it was released to growers there. Since it is being planted there fairly extensively, it was felt that it should be named; and since some New Zealand growers had already shortened the name from N.Y. 1017 to New Yorker, it was felt that this was an appropriate name for it.

Fruit

New Yorker is a white-fleshed, free-stone nectarine which ripens about August 20 at Geneva, just after the Redhaven peach. It is round to oblate in shape, about 80% covered with a dark red blush over a greenish white ground color. The flesh is juicy, slightly coarse, and medium firm. The flavor is sweet and rich, and the quality is high.

Tree

The tree is vigorous and productive. The blossom buds are slightly more resistant than Redhaven peach buds to injury by low winter temperatures. The flowers are large and

showy, and the leaf glands are reniform in shape. Care should be taken to select wide-angled crotches for the scaffold branches, because this clone has a tendency toward narrow crotches, making a structurally weak tree.

Origin

This nectarine was selected from a population of selfed seedlings of N.Y. 252 (a seedling of Livingston x Greensboro). The original cross which produced N.Y. 252 was made in 1929 by Prof. Richard Wellington.

New Yorker was selected in 1945 by Henry Bennett, General Manager of the New York Coop. Fruit Testing Association, and was sent out for field testing in 1955 as N.Y. 1017. In the ten years that it has been available from the Association it has not attracted much attention in New York. The N. Y. Agr. Exp. Station has, therefore not named nor introduced it for New York growers. However, now that this selection seems to have found a spot in New Zealand, it seems fitting that it should be introduced and named New Yorker, as a reminder of its origin.

Trees of New Yorker are available from the N. Y. Coop. Fruit Testing Association, Geneva, N. Y.

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